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INFORMATION

April 13, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT: Vietnam Ad Hoc Group

MORI/CDF  
C03233278  
pages 2-5

Attached at Tab A is a memorandum for the files covering the Vietnam Ad Hoc Working Group meeting of April 10, 1970.

Att.

JCS review completed pages 2-5

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE  
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

State Dept review completed pages 2-5

OSD review completed pages 2-5

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

SUBJECT: Vietnam Ad Hoc Working Group Meeting, April 10, 1970

1. Sullivan spoke of the press report that two of "our boys" had been seen across the border in Cambodia assisting a South Vietnamese unit build defenses for a Cambodian border post. What was the story on this? Col. Constant (representing ISA) said that these were representatives of the Second Field Force, and that the story given out by Saigon was that in accordance with normal procedures they had been engaged in friendly liaison with the Cambodians. Constant hoped that this would deflect criticism, but Sullivan was dubious.
  2. Sullivan called attention to a resolution put forward by Senator Mondale, noting that State had been asked for Executive branch comments. This resolution was along the lines of the proposals by the Clark Kerr Committee, in that it called for a cease-fire in Vietnam and the appointment of a permanent head of the US delegation in Paris. Sullivan felt that the resolution would probably pass because of its "motherhood" nature. State's answer would be geared to what appeared likely to happen on the resolution - if it looked like it would pass, State would not oppose it but would point out that the President has already taken a position on a cease-fire, and will appoint a successor to Lodge when the time comes. On the other hand, if the resolution seemed unlikely to pass, State would take a different posture. Sullivan said that he would appreciate word from Bryce Harlow on how Harlow thought the vote would go on the Mondale Resolution.
- Sullivan then brought up the Mathias Resolution, saying that at State's instigation Senator Aiken had taken the position that paragraph 4 should be revised (this was the paragraph alleging that the GVN did not command the support of the population and calling on the US to effect changes). The Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff had come up with a satisfactory revision of paragraph 4, but had added a fifth paragraph to the effect that the Vietnam appropriation should be used only for the purpose of getting the US forces out of Vietnam. Aiken had sent this paragraph to State for revision, but State had returned it to the Senator saying that it was unacceptable in any form so there was no point in attempting to revise it. Sullivan noted that this paragraph would have the effect of interfering with the President's Constitutional role in foreign affairs.

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4. Sullivan declared that a memorandum had come in from Habib covering his conversation with Froment-Meurice as a follow-up to what Froment-Meurice had said to Lam. On the question of whether the interventionists in Vietnam were limited by the French to Vietnam forces and did not include the North Vietnamese, Froment-Meurice had offered confirmation. Habib had then given Froment-Meurice "both barrels". Habib was of the opinion that Le Duc Tho might possibly be going back to Hanoi to carry the word on this aspect of the French negotiations proposal. This thought was at variance with the CIA analysis that Le Duc Tho was going back for consultations on the Cambodian situation. I said that both of these questions might well be discussed in Hanoi along with other related issues.

5. Sullivan said he had asked Frank Sieverts to check into the fact that while Cora Weiss had provided names of about 330 POWs including some previously carried as missing, there are still about 50 individuals previously carried as POWs who have not been included in the Cora Weiss listings. Sieverts and Jefferson of DOD would look into the question of whether the criteria on which these 50 had been carried as POWs were all that hard. He understood that early in the game the Navy had carried as a POW almost anyone who had been shot down. However, if we had hard evidence from people who had seen or heard of the presence of those not on the lists so that we were convinced they had been POWs, we would examine whether we would want Habib to bring them up by name in Paris or ask Hanoi about them in some other way. We were now about at the end of the POW list, if these 50 were counted.

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6. Sullivan noted that there had been a mild disparity in what the Australians had said to Secretary Laird as well as to Bunker and Abrams and what they had said recently in Washington concerning their troop withdrawals. Originally they had said that they were thinking of making their announcement together with ours, that this would not affect their May rotation, and that they wanted to carry out the withdrawal as part of their November rotation. When they had come to State to talk to Rogers, though, they had said that their withdrawal should be tied in with our fourth slice, and completed before the announcement of our fifth withdrawal. Sullivan had lunched with Fraser and had said they were perhaps presuming that our withdrawal to be announced in April would last through November, but that this was perhaps not accurate and could be accomplished sooner. Abrams needed to know what the Australians had in mind for his own planning purposes. The Australian reply was that for political reasons they had to carry out their moves on the basis of our withdrawals rather than pinning it to any particular date. Sullivan said he would try to straighten this question out with Laird - it was confusing, and we needed to wrap up all the US-Australian talks held here in one paper so that a single, consistent paper would go out to the field.

7. On the subject of Australian assistance to the GVN in training, Sullivan had asked Fraser if the Australians were thinking of sending Vietnamese to their jungle training camp in Australia. The answer had been negative, but Fraser had said they were considering sending more Australians to Vietnam, possibly to concentrate on NCO training.

8. On the GVN's economic problems, Sullivan remarked that Bunker's and Berger's recent discussion with Thieu on economic matters had been quite good. He and Nooter agreed that if Laird accepted the Mission's judgment that we could hold to the 118 to the dollar rate for piaster purchases we would be in a very good position. Defense had accepted such a hold-the-line policy in 1966 and 1967 in keeping the piaster purchase rate lower than the import rate of exchange. The difference was that in those days we did not have the Congressional pressure under which we now labored. Nooter stated that AID would try to get a cable out today on this matter which would give the Mission some leeway in establishing the rate.

9. Sullivan observed that the negotiations papers had been put into near-final form but maintained that there were two or three issues in them which hinged on the cease-fire paper. He asked about the NSC schedule in considering this paper. I informed him that as a result of a conversation with Mrs. Davis, it appeared highly unlikely that NSC consideration of the cease-fire paper could

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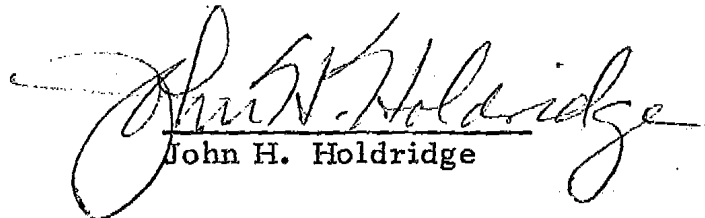
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be as early as May 12 as Sullivan desired. The NSC schedule was simply too tight to permit the cease-fire issue to be inserted unless a critical need for early action arose. I thought that the best thing which Sullivan could do was to bring the papers as close to completion as possible so that they would be ready for the next step. Sullivan emphasized that the issue was not so much completing the papers per se, but reconciling the split between CIA and State on the one hand and DOD and the Joint Chiefs on the other as to whether a withdrawal was a necessary prerequisite for a cease-fire.

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11. Sullivan mentioned in passing that Bunker had not yet come in with his draft statement on the Chap case, but he assumed that the statement would be arriving shortly.

12. As a final note, Nooter reported that Senator Muskie was considering putting forward a bill that would offer \$320 million over the next four years in support of the GVN land reform program. Nooter's concern was whether this sum might pinch AID in other programs worldwide, or cut back on what AID wanted for other aspects of its activities in Vietnam. If called upon to comment on the Muskie Bill, the problem would be to maintain a sufficient upbeat approach while remaining non-committal on the total funds to be expended.

  
John H. Holdridge

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